

Hu Jintao and the Sixth Plenum

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The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee's Sixth Plenum, in October of last year, passed a long resolution endorsing a major theme that the Hu Jintao leadership has pressed since 2004: building a "socialist harmonious society." The plenum also deferred addressing Party and army leadership personnel issues that it might have taken up. In so doing, the plenum's proceedings provided new clues to the ambiguities of Hu Jintao's power in the current Party leadership.

The 16th Central Committee's Sixth Plenum was held in Beijing on 8–11 October 2006. According to the plenum communiqué, the plenum reviewed and endorsed a work report "commissioned" by the Party Politburo and delivered by Hu Jintao. Delivery of a Politburo work report, which has not been published in PRC media, follows a practice, described as an exercise in Politburo accountability, that was first employed in the Zhao Ziyang era in the late 1980s and that has been followed since Hu Jintao became Party general secretary in 2002.

The long resolution that the plenum endorsed was published in PRC media on 18 October, a week after the plenum closed. At the plenum, Wu Bangguo—the Party's second-ranking leader and chairman of China's parliament (the National People's Congress, or NPC), and the leader who presided over the resolution's drafting—delivered a speech "explaining" the significance of the resolution. On 20 October, two days after the resolution was published, the Party newspaper *People's Daily* carried a long article under Wu's byline on the resolution that appears to be his plenum speech, though the article was not so identified.

In addition, as expected, the plenum scheduled the Party's 17th National Congress to convene "in the second half of 2007." If past practices continue, a Seventh Plenum will set the precise dates for the congress in late summer or early fall next year.

Leadership Issues

The plenum communiqué gave no indication that the plenum discussed adjustments to the top leadership. The Politburo meeting on 24 July 2006 that set the general timing of the plenum for October had specified only two items on the plenum's agenda—reviewing a resolution of building a "socialist harmonious society" and setting the general schedule for the 17th CCP Congress.

In the interim, however, two changes in the top leadership might plausibly have been added to the October plenum agenda. One was the replacement in August of ailing

PLA Navy Commander Zhang Dingfa by his deputy commander Wu Shengli. Zhang served concurrently and apparently ex officio as member of the Central Military Commission (CMC), and so the Sixth Plenum might have promoted Wu to the CMC to replace Zhang. The other leadership change resulted from the implication of Shanghai CCP Secretary and Politburo member Chen Liangyu in a major social security funds corruption case, announced by an extraordinary Politburo meeting on 24 September. (For more on the Chen Liangyu case, see Cheng Li's article in this issue of *CLM*.)

Another Politburo meeting the next day endorsed the Politburo work report that Hu would present to the plenum and the draft Party resolution on "socialist harmonious society," and it set the precise dates for the plenum. But Xinhua's account on the 26th did not indicate that the Politburo had expanded the plenum agenda to include personnel questions. Nevertheless, PRC media on the eve of the plenum took note of "expectations" among "outside circles" that the plenum would take up both Zhang Dingfa's replacement and the Chen Liangyu case. The PRC-owned Hong Kong newspaper *Wen Wei Po* reported on 7 October—the day before the plenum opened in Beijing—that the plenum could be expected to produce a "final conclusion" in the Chen case and that whether the plenum would address Wu Shengli's promotion to the CMC was "worth paying attention to." The *Wen Wei Po* story was picked up by the Hong Kong-based China News Service. Both *Wen Wei Po* and China News Service receive routine guidance through Mainland propaganda channels and are normally a source of reliable reporting on CCP affairs.

The removal of Chen Liangyu undoubtedly strengthens the hand of Party general secretary Hu Jintao and PRC premier Wen Jiabao while preparations for next year's 17th CCP Congress get into full swing, as many Hong Kong and foreign observers have inferred. But the failure of the Sixth Plenum to take up the Chen case may not necessarily reflect continued factional wrangling over the case (although such wrangling undoubtedly exists).

Instead, a number of procedural factors may explain the plenum's failure to address both the Chen Liangyu case and the promotion of Wu Shengli to the CMC. As for the Chen Liangyu case, the Politburo's 24 September decision on Chen preceded the plenum by only two weeks. After hearing a report by the Party's Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) on its "initial" investigation of his corruption, the Politburo authorized the CDIC to "file a case for investigation" into Chen Liangyu's culpability, indicating that the investigation had only begun. In addition, the Politburo removed Chen from his leadership posts in Shanghai but only "suspended" Chen's membership on the Politburo itself.

The most relevant parallel to the handling of the Chen Liangyu case, as has been widely noted among Hong Kong and foreign observers, is the corruption case against Beijing City CCP chief and Politburo member Chen Xitong in late April 1995. In contrast to the Chen Liangyu case, however, Chen Xitong, according to a report by the official news agency Xinhua on 27 April 1995, "resigned" from the Politburo and his Beijing posts after being implicated in the case of Wang Baoshen, a Beijing vice mayor who committed suicide over complicity in a range of corrupt activities. Chen was not formally

“dismissed” from the Politburo until a full five months later, at the 14th Central Committee’s Fifth Plenum in September 1995, after a long CDIC investigation.

That the Chen Liangyu case is still under investigation is apparent from recent PRC media attention to the annual meeting of the CDIC, held in Beijing on 8–10 January 2007. Once again, the Hong Kong communist newspaper *Wen Wei Po* jumped the gun on the eve of the meeting, predicting that the meeting would report on the progress of the Chen case. On 4 January, the paper recalled that the Sixth Plenum had not addressed the Chen case and reported remarks by “experts in the Party” that the investigation process takes considerable time once a case has been formally filed. The paper then cited “expectations” of “people in and outside the Party” that the CDIC meeting would report on the progress of the Chen case. Nevertheless, none of the reporting in PRC media on the CDIC meeting mentioned the Chen case.

In view of the scale of the Shanghai corruption scandal as reported in some PRC media accounts, and because of its political sensitivity, it appears likely that a final dismissal of Chen Liangyu will await the Central Committee’s Seventh Plenum, probably in late summer or early fall, on the eve of the 17th CCP Congress. That plenum, which will formally set the congress’s schedule and agenda, will endorse the outgoing Politburo’s nominations for the new Politburo to be installed by the congress and the new Central Committee’s first plenum. By that time, the intense politicking that precedes a Party congress—in which the Chen case plays a part—will have produced a consensus about the forthcoming adjustments to the Party’s top leadership.

The Sixth Plenum’s failure to promote newly appointed Navy Commander Wu Shengli to the CMC, replacing Zhang Dingfa, also merits explanation. Central Committee plenums do on occasion make appointments to the CMC, China’s top military decision-making body. For example, the 14th Central Committee’s Fifth Plenum in September 1995—the same meeting that had formally dismissed Chen Xitong from the Politburo—added two new members to the CMC and also promoted two existing members to the post of CMC vice chairman. Those changes had marked preliminary steps toward the retirement two years later, at the Party’s 15th Congress in 1997, of two senior PLA generals who had been brought out of retirement in 1992 to assist Jiang Zemin in asserting leadership over the army.

Navy Commander Zhang Dingfa had been promoted onto the CMC in September 2004, at the Central Committee’s Fourth Plenum, as part of a broader effort to institutionalize appointment of the commanders of the PLA’s specialized service arms—the Navy, the Air Force, and the Second Artillery (China’s strategic forces)—to balance the traditional dominance on the body of PLA ground force commanders. When *Wen Wei Po* reported Wu Shengli replacing Zhang as Navy commander on 16 August, it was natural to presume that Wu might also take Zhang’s place on the CMC, as *Wen Wei Po* presumed on 7 October in previewing the forthcoming Sixth Plenum.

Considerations of timing may explain the failure of the Sixth Plenum to add Wu Shengli to the CMC. According to subsequent PRC media accounts, Zhang had fallen

seriously ill during a grassroots inspection early in 2006. He made occasional public appearances thereafter, although his absence was notable on major occasions in the following months. He made his last public appearance on 4 August, and he was finally replaced as Navy commander by Wu Shengli on 16 August. Although Zhang died on 14 December, PRC media attention to his death noted that in the months since his replacement as Navy commander he had been “recuperating.”

Zhang died at age 63, and so he may in any case have been expected to retire as Navy commander within two years, given prevailing PLA retirement guidelines, perhaps in the immediate wake of the 17th Congress. The decision to replace Zhang as Navy commander may therefore have reflected the need for an active and functioning Navy commander from an ongoing operational standpoint. But the decision to promote Wu to Zhang’s post on the CMC may have been deferred pending Party leadership deliberations on the broader adjustments to the CMC’s membership over the coming year heading into the 17th Congress. Presuming that Wu continues in his new role as Navy commander, his promotion onto the CMC following the Party congress seems certain, and he may already be attending CMC meetings to represent the Navy on an informal basis. But formal appointment to the CMC membership may await the congress and the new Central Committee’s first plenum.

Plenum Resolution

The long resolution adopted at the Sixth Plenum on “major issues concerning the building of socialist harmonious society” is the culmination of a two-year effort under the Hu leadership to lay out a programmatic Party response to the daunting array of tensions in Chinese society that have emerged as a consequence of economic reforms set in motion 25 years ago. The resolution sketches a series of priorities in Party work over the next several years until 2020 aimed at addressing several issues that now figure prominently in the maintenance of social stability and so political order:

- Provision of adequate social services and legal processes in rural areas, under the rubric of “building a new socialist countryside” (a priority enshrined at the National Work Conference on Agriculture and Rural Policy in December 2005), to stem incidents of rural disaffection and unrest.
- Redressing imbalances in regional development after two decades’ emphasis on fast economic growth in China’s coastal regions, by directing accelerated central revenue transfers to the central and western provinces.
- Redressing income disparities and labor dislocation resulting from the steady dissolution of China’s state-owned industries and collectivized agriculture and from the resulting creation of a national labor market.
- Renewed emphasis on expanding education and a new focus on ensuring access to educational opportunity in China’s less developed regions through enhanced central allocation of resources.
- Reconstruction of China’s medical and public health services debilitated by the dissolution of the formerly state-owned and collective work unit economy.

- Recasting Party guidance of China's cultural life according to the criterion of "social benefits" (*xiaoyi* 效益) rather than the longstanding emphasis on "social effects" (*xiaoguo* 效果) and control over media that for the past two decades have been driven increasingly by market demand rather than Party directive.
- Enhanced emphasis on the environmental impact of economic development rather than a lopsided focus on economic growth.

The object of these efforts, according to the resolution, is to create "a socialist society that is democratic and law-based, fair and just, trustworthy and friendly, full of vigor and vitality, secure and orderly, and in which man and nature are in harmony"—criteria for a "socialist harmonious society" that Hu Jintao had first set forth in a speech at the Central Party School on 19 February 2005.

Leadership attention to the theme of a "socialist harmonious society" emerged in the fall of 2004. Jiang Zemin's work report to the 16th Party Congress in November 2002 had set "social harmony" as a priority. But the goal of building a "socialist harmonious society" was first put forward in authoritative Party statements in the Central Committee resolution on improving the CCP's ability to govern adopted at the Fourth Plenum in September 2004. Thereafter, Hu Jintao set down the elements of a "socialist harmonious society" in his 19 February 2005 Central Party School speech, as recounted above. Later the same month, Hu presided over a Politburo study session devoted to the topic, and it was incorporated into the "proposals" for compiling the 11th Five-Year Plan for national economic and social development, adopted at the Fifth Plenum in October 2005. On 4 March 2006, during a meeting with delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Hu further laid out eight standards of "honor and disgrace" as the foundation of a civic ethics to be incorporated into "socialist harmonious society." These standards were further elaborated by an authoritative set of "opinions" formulated by the Central Committee's Committee for Guiding the Building of Socialist Spiritual Civilization (Xinhua, 23 May 2006). The decision to draft the Sixth Plenum resolution itself was made at a Politburo meeting in February 2006, and the draft resolution went through a prolonged process of review by the Politburo and its Standing Committee and circulation broadly within the Party before being submitted to the plenum in October.

Ideological Lineage of "Harmonious Society"

That a highly authoritative CCP resolution declares "social harmony" as a foremost goal of the Party may seem jarring to Party members and, more broadly, older generations of Chinese whose understanding of Marxism-Leninism derives from the era of Mao Zedong's leadership. From 1957 on, Mao had focused on waging "class struggle" as the core principle of his thought and as the fundamental mission of the CCP and all "genuine" revolutionary parties. Mao's emphasis on continuing class warfare even under socialism had been the central concept of his thesis of "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." According to that view, "class struggle" does not subside with the takeover by the state of all major means of economic production; rather,

it continues and even grows more acute as a socialist society approaches its transition to communism because class antagonisms persist and sharpen.

Mao's thesis on the primacy of class struggle provided the ideological framework for Beijing's ferocious polemics against Moscow in the early 1960s and its attempt in 1963 to redirect the international communist movement. It also served as the ideological rationale for Mao's launching of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, against a party that he believed had become corrupted by elite privilege, and against leadership colleagues who he believed were leading the CCP astray. Ideas that disputed Mao's focus on class warfare in favor of social stability and harmony were attacked as "revisionist," borrowing the label applied in late-1890s debates in the international workers' movement to Eduard Bernstein and other "reformist" advocates in the German Social Democratic Party for asserting the possibility of a peaceful, non-revolutionary route to socialism. Mao's thesis of "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" was enshrined as his greatest contribution to the "treasure house of Marxist-Leninist theory" at the 1969 Ninth, 1973 10th, and 1977 11th Party Congresses.

After Mao's death in 1976 and as Deng Xiaoping and his allies asserted control over the CCP's agenda, Mao's ideas on "class struggle" were discredited. The CCP 11th Central Committee's Third Plenum in December 1978 established "developing the forces of economic production and raising the livelihood of the Chinese people" as the foremost task of the CCP and relegated waging class struggle to a secondary task. The CCP's 1981 resolution on Party history authoritatively dismissed Mao's "theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" as erroneous, and in the spring of 1981, the mid-1950s classification of the PRC as a "people's democratic dictatorship"—signifying a broadened class base supporting the regime—was revived.

Meanwhile, the Deng leadership began to characterize its policies no longer as "revolutionary" but rather as advancing "reform" (*gaige* 改革), previously a dirty word in the Maoist lexicon. In 1986, the 12th Central Committee's Sixth Plenum set forth the idea of a "common ideal" that unites all PRC citizens behind the agenda of China's modernization under socialism, whether "Party members or non-Party people, Marxists or non-Marxists, atheists or believers, and citizens at home or abroad." But at no point in the Deng era did authoritative Party statements endorse a "harmonious society" as the overarching goal of the Party.

Suggesting defensiveness about the legitimacy of the concepts set down in the plenum resolution, leadership statements and authoritative commentary since the Sixth Plenum have taken pains to assert the ideological orthodoxy of the goal of a "socialist harmonious society." The plenum resolution itself asserted that "social harmony" is in "the intrinsic nature of socialism" and is a target that the CCP has pursued since the founding of the PRC. In his 20 October *People's Daily* article, Wu Bangguo described the significance of the plenum resolution as "summing up the practical experience" of the CCP in promoting "social harmony" since 1949. The plenum resolution, Wu stated, presents a "scientific analysis" of China's present international and domestic context, of

the “special characteristics of China’s development at this stage,” and of the “outstanding contradictions and problems that affect social harmony” at present.

In the same vein, commentators in PRC media, especially from the Party’s Central Party School, have taken pains to show that the goal of social harmony was set forth in Marx and Engels’ *Communist Manifesto* and in Mao’s own writings—in particular, in the April 1956 “On the Ten Great Relations” speech and in his early 1957 “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People” speech—and has been the ultimate, though very long-term goal of all communist parties. By this logic, progressively harmonious relations in a socialist society are the inevitable consequence of the advance of wealth and prosperity under socialism, manifested foremost in the eventual disappearance of classes and the state with the achievement of communism.

Leadership statements and media commentary have also emphasized that the Party’s current focus on building a “socialist harmonious society” builds on the concept of the “three represents” set down as authoritative CCP doctrine under Hu’s predecessor as Party general secretary, Jiang Zemin. In a long interview published in the Shanghai Party newspaper *Liberation Daily* (解放日报 *Jiefang Ribao*) on 27 October, for example, former Central Party School executive vice president and Hu Jintao lieutenant Zheng Bijian directly linked Hu’s delineation of the characteristics of “socialist harmonious society” in his February 2005 speech at the Party school to Jiang’s call on the CCP to “understand and accurately grasp the pervasive changes” under way in Chinese society and to formulate Party policies to “represent the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority” of China’s people. In his *People’s Daily* article on 20 October, Wu Bangguo also depicted the continuity of the “social harmony” concept with Jiang Zemin’s ideas and described the *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, which have been the subject of a Party-wide study campaign since their publication in 2006, as “a powerful theoretical weapon” in building a “socialist harmonious society.”

Confucian Restoration?

Several commentators have also taken pains to argue the difference between the Marxist-Leninist pursuit of “social harmony,” which the Sixth Plenum resolution embodies, and “utopian” ideas of harmony espoused both by Western idealist philosophers such as Plato in the *Republic* and Thomas More in *Utopia* and by China’s own Confucian and Daoist traditions from the past. “Countless sages and men with lofty ideals proposed beautiful visions and painted beautiful pictures of world harmony” in the past, a long Xinhua account on 19 October of the drafting of the plenum resolution noted. Nevertheless, it concluded, “a series of important expositions of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on socialist society profoundly point to the fact that only a harmonious society is true socialism and only socialism can achieve true social harmony.” Similarly, in his *People’s Daily* article on 20 October, Wu Bangguo argued that “the socialist harmonious society that we want to build is not the same as the ‘world of Great Harmony’ [*datong shijie* 大同世界] envisioned by some thinkers in the history of China, nor is it the same as the ‘utopia’

depicted by utopian socialists.” “Instead,” Wu continued, “it is a product of integrating the Marxist idea of social harmony with contemporary Chinese reality.”

Despite such disclaimers, some foreign observers have seen the CCP’s new goal of a “harmonious society,” manifested in the plenum resolution and in leadership pronouncements such as Hu Jintao’s delineation last March of a standards of “honor and disgrace,” as signaling a restoration of traditional Confucian concepts in CCP political discourse. There is no denying that social harmony was an enduring goal in traditional Confucian political thought. Confucius himself lived in an age of accelerating political fragmentation and social change, and many of his ideas set down later in the *Analects* were aimed at restoring order to an age he perceived to be in chaos. But apart from this shared overarching goal, there seems little in common between the values and concepts of traditional Confucianism and those of “socialist harmonious society.”

For one thing, none of the vocabulary of Confucian discourse—the focus on ceremonial propriety (*li* 禮), benevolence or humaneness (*ren* 仁), righteousness (*yi* 義), or reciprocity (*shu* 恕), and filial piety (*xiao* 孝)—has been expropriated into the contemporary explications of what a “socialist harmonious society” entails. For another thing, there appears little substantive convergence between the content of traditional Confucian and contemporary CCP accounts of what “social harmony” requires. Hu Jintao’s 4 March 2006 list of “eight honors and eight disgraces” as the core elements of a “socialist concept of honor and disgrace,” for example, invites comparison to the semi-monthly recitations (the *xiangyue* 鄉約) by local officials of orthodox Confucian duties to local society during the last imperial regime to govern China, the Manchu Qing dynasty. These recitations were mandated first by the Shunzhi Emperor in a 1659 edict prescribing six maxims, later expanded to 16 by the Kangxi Emperor in 1670. Such a comparison, as follows, offers little evidence of convergence in concept or value:

Hu Jintao’s “8 Dos & 8 Don’ts”

1. It is an honor to love the motherland and a disgrace to do harm to the motherland.
2. It is an honor to serve the people and a disgrace to betray the people.
3. It is an honor to advocate science and a disgrace to be ignorant.
4. It is an honor to work diligently and a disgrace to indulge in ease and comfort.
5. It is an honor to unite and help one another and a disgrace to make gains at others’ expense.

The Shunzhi Emperor’s 6 Maxims¹

1. Perform filial duties to your parents.
2. Honor and respect your elders and superiors.
3. Maintain harmonious relationships with your neighbors.
4. Instruct and discipline your sons and grandsons.
5. Let each work peacefully for his livelihood.

6. It is an honor to be honest and trustworthy and a disgrace to discard moral principles in pursuit of profit.
 7. It is an honor to be disciplined and law-abiding and a disgrace to break laws and discipline.
 8. It is an honor to live plainly and work hard and a disgrace to wallow in luxury and pleasure.
6. Do not commit wrongful deeds.

These considerations together suggest that intimations of a looming Confucian restoration in the midst of a communist political order are not well founded.

A Soviet Parallel?

If Hu Jintao's list of "eight honors and eight disgraces" seems remote from Confucian social values, at least as they were expressed in the Qing era, they do seem akin to moral principles advanced by the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in its last decades. The Party Program adopted at the CPSU's 22nd Party Congress in 1961 put forward a dozen principles for moral behavior among Soviet citizens that in many respects foreshadow those of Hu Jintao in China 45 years later:

- Devotion to the communist cause and love of the socialist motherland and other socialist countries;
- conscientious labor for the good of society—he who does not work, neither shall he eat;
- concern on the part of everyone for the preservation and growth of public wealth.
- A high sense of public duty and intolerance of actions harmful to the public interest;
- collectivism and comradesly mutual assistance—one for all and all for one;
- humane relations and mutual respect between individuals—man is to man a friend, comrade and brother;
- honesty and truthfulness, moral purity, modesty, and unpretentiousness in social and private life;
- mutual respect in family and concern for the upbringing of children.
- An uncompromising attitude toward injustice, parasitism, dishonesty, careerism, and money-grubbing;
- friendship and brotherhood among all peoples of the USSR and intolerance of national and racial hatred;
- an uncompromising attitude toward the enemies of communism, peace, and the freedom of nations; and
- fraternal solidarity with the working peoples of all countries and with all peoples.²

These principles were consonant with the new categorization of the CPSU as a “party of the whole people” and of the USSR as a “state of the whole people,” one of the main theoretical innovations advanced in the 1961 CPSU program. In Soviet politics, these principles reinforced the ideological authority of Khrushchev’s attacks on Stalin, begun in his “secret speech” to the 20th CPSU Congress in February 1956, for “exaggerating class struggle” in the great purges of the 1930s and late 1940s. They also reflected the CPSU’s attempt to adjust to the sweeping changes in Soviet society in the postwar years. The USSR was officially defined as a “state of the whole people” in the revised Soviet constitution of 1976.

Responding defensively to evident intra-Party controversy, Chinese commentators in recent years have explicitly rejected any connection between Jiang Zemin’s thesis of the “three represents”—the assertion, in part, that the CCP should “represent the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority” of China’s people—and the Soviet concept of a party and state “of the whole people.” In 2001, Zheng Bijian, then still Hu Jintao’s deputy at the Central Party School, insisted that Jiang’s “three represents” conception meant that the CCP remained the party of China’s most advanced class, the workers, while a “party of the whole people” amounted to a “catch-all party” that could not ultimately reconcile the inevitable conflicts of interest among China’s entire people.³

That both Jiang’s “three represents” thesis and the new “harmonious society” goal have nevertheless moved CCP doctrines steadily in the direction of former Soviet notions of a “party of the whole people” and “state of the whole people” is obvious. The basis of the Soviet concepts was that the advance of socialism in the USSR had diluted the basis for class conflict in Soviet society, so that the fundamental interests of all Soviet people were identical under the leadership of the CPSU, which could therefore claim to represent the interests of all. Ratified as authoritative CCP doctrine in his July 2001 Party anniversary speech, Jiang’s call on the CCP to “represent the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority” of China’s people—and the slick analysis of Chinese society in terms of “strata” (*jiceng* 基层) rather than “classes” (*jieji* 阶级)—marks a long step toward the older Soviet formulation. And the new “socialist harmonious society” idea marks a further step in that direction.

Hu Jintao and “Socialist Harmonious Society”

From the standpoint of leadership politics, the plenum resolution and the commentary on it are interesting because in no place do they credit the concept of “socialist harmonious society” as a product of Hu Jintao’s personal insight or initiative. The plenum resolution is instead described everywhere as “the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the entire Party and the people of all nationalities of the entire country.” Hu is frequently depicted as playing important roles in the process of formulating the concept of “socialist harmonious society,” but he is not credited as its author nor is it described as his exclusive intellectual property.

Such treatment comports with the approach apparent in PRC media since Hu's installation as Party general secretary in 2002 that has emphasized collective leadership processes and played down Hu's unique role in formulating new initiatives in Party ideology and in policy. The concept of "socialist harmonious society" thus complements other new theoretical and policy departures during Hu's tenure—such as pursuing "people-centered" policies, employing the "scientific development concept" in policy formulation, and building a "new socialist countryside"—that have uniformly been described as "innovations that have emerged since the 16th CCP Congress" under a collective leadership. In contrast, Jiang Zemin was credited with several major doctrinal and policy departures in the 1990s that underscored his ideological authority and that were said to comprise his ideological legacy.

The general avoidance of ascribing new doctrinal departures uniquely to Hu is consistent with other indications of a deliberate emphasis on leadership collectivism under Hu Jintao:

- PRC media from time to time refer to the "Hu-Wen [Jiabao] leadership." No comparable references in PRC media to the "Mao-Zhou leadership" in the 1950s–70s, to the "Hu [Yaobang]-Zhao [Ziyang] leadership" in the 1980s, or to the "Jiang-Li [Peng] leadership" in the 1990s come to mind.
- Now nearly five years into his term as Party general secretary, Hu Jintao has yet to be identified—with a single exception—as "core leader" of his generation of leaders.⁴ The Party's top leadership is thus routinely referred to as "the Party Central Committee with Comrade Hu Jintao as general secretary." In contrast, PRC media previously referred to "the Party Central Committee with Comrade Jiang Zemin as core leader."

These and similar indications of an effort to play down Hu's primacy in leadership politics have frequently been taken by many Hong Kong and Western observers as reflecting efforts by Jiang Zemin and his presumed "Shanghai Gang" to blunt Hu's authority. From that perspective, it is possible that Hu will be granted the deference extended to Jiang Zemin during his tenure as general secretary if Hu manages to consolidate significantly his power and curb that of Jiang's presumptive factional adherents at the 17th CCP Congress next fall. At this point, however, the accumulating indications from PRC media of a consistent policy of playing down the supreme authority of Hu Jintao suggest with increasing weight the likelihood that Hu himself has promoted this shift in public image of the Party leadership to accord with his own preferences and with a different political dynamic in the leadership that he seeks to implant.

Notes

¹ As translated in Hsiao Kung-ch'uan, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960), p.187.

² *Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (The Road to Communism)* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), pp. 556–557. See also the discussion of these "moral principles" in the Soviet textbook *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism: A Manual*, second revised edition (Moscow:

Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963, pp. 681–684. This edition of the textbook, compiled under the direction of the liberal CPSU theoretician Otto Kuusinen and others who became prominent in the brief Andropov period of 1982–83 and later the Gorbachev reform era after 1985, was intensely controversial because it incorporated ideological themes strongly associated with the de-Stalinizing thaw under Nikita Khrushchev.

³ On Zheng's comments and their significance, see Joseph Fewsmith, "Rethinking the Role of the CCP: Explicating Jiang Zemin's Party Anniversary Speech," *China Leadership Monitor* 2 (2002), pp. 5–6.

⁴ The sole exception occurred in February 2005. On this instance and other indications of a deliberate policy of playing down Hu Jintao's primacy in the Party leadership, see Alice Miller, "National People's Congress Completes Jiang-Hu Succession," *China Leadership Monitor* 14 (2005).